Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure for CIRO Students

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1. Policy Statement
The Chartered Institution of Railway Operators (CIRO) strives to provide the highest quality services for its students. However, despite our best efforts, we do recognise that our practices could always be improved. When we fall short of the high standards, we set for ourselves, we would like to hear about it. We take all feedback seriously – both good and bad – and treat all feedback as an opportunity to develop.

2. Purpose of Policy
CIRO is committed to providing a quality service for its students, working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect of all our stakeholders.

CIRO recognises that many concerns may be raised informally and can be dealt with quickly and simply. Complaints will be resolved early and promptly, preferably keeping it as close to the source of the problem as possible and dealing with it by informal means. By encouraging complainants to come forward with concerns at an early stage, matters can be discussed and any misunderstandings can be resolved by telephone conversation, face to face meeting, email or letter to the appropriate person.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear understanding of how we handle and respond to complaints to ensure that:

- Provide operational definition of the term complaint
- Clarify the eligible grounds for a complaint
- Explain the general provisions pertaining to complaints
- Clarify the complaints procedure and timelines with details of the roles and responsibilities of complainants, CIRO and external regulatory bodies if applicable.

CIRO recognises that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly and an informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, the formal complaints procedure should be followed, which should be seen as a last resort in reaching a solution.

3. Definitions
For the purpose of this policy, a complaint may be defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction or concern relating to CIRO’s service provision delivered to students.

- A complainant may be defined as the person who has made the complaint
- A student is anyone who is enrolled onto a CIRO higher education course.

4. Aims of Policy
The aim of this policy is to ensure CIRO is responsive to concerns or complaints from any of our stakeholders. Both negative and positive feedback is recognised as a valuable resource to enable us to improve the quality of our services and learning provision.

All complaints will be dealt with promptly and consistently and handled with courtesy and fairness. As a result of a complaint, CIRO will aim to rectify the issue and improve our service.
All complaints will be taken seriously and in order that CIRO can learn and improve, accurate and complete records of all complaints received, results correspondence, interviews and actions taken will be maintained.

5. Scope of Policy
The scope of this policy is to enable CIRO students to raise matters of concern about our services or provision to our attention, so that they can be investigated and resolved in the clearest and fairest way possible.

This procedure is for use of any existing CIRO students who seeks or received a service from us. It also extends to anyone who may be directly affected by our services or activities.

Anonymous complaints will be logged and monitored but not investigated under normal circumstances.

6. Complaint Procedure

Informal Complaints:
An informal approach is appropriate in some cases. These complaints will be raised with, and responded to, by the appropriate CIRO Learning and Development team within 7 days receipt of the complaint. If the issue is not resolved at this stage, the CIRO team member and/or complainant should raise the matter with the Learning and Development Manager (learning@railwayoperators.co.uk) and the formal complaint procedure will be followed.

Formal Complaints:
In some cases, an informal approach may not be appropriate due to either the seriousness or sensitive nature of the issue or a conflict with the appropriate CIRO team member. In these circumstances the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Complaint Notification:
The details of the complaint should be sent to the Learning and Development Manager, providing as much information as possible and including any supporting documentation.

Complaints can be reported by the following methods:

Email: learning@railwayoperators.co.uk
Telephone: 0333 344 0523
Post: Chartered Institution of Railway Operations
      Beacon Building 2nd Floor
      Stafford Enterprise Park West
      Weston Road
      Stafford
      ST18 0BF

Complaint Recording:
All complaints received will be logged a Complaints Log and a Complaint Form will be raised and issued to the appropriate person for investigation. The Learning and Development Manager will contact the complainant within 2 working days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint. In the
absence of the Learning and Development Manager, a member of the Learning and Development team will be able to acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

*Complaint Investigation:*

The appropriate person will fully investigate the complaint and take any necessary corrective action. Details of the investigation and corrective action will be recorded on the Complaint Form and returned to the Learning and Development Manager. This will normally be completed within 14 working days, however, more complex issues may take longer. In these circumstances the Learning and Development Manager will provide an update on the status of the complaint.

*Corrective Action:*

The details of the immediate corrective action carried out to address the complaint are recorded by the person investigating the complaint.

*Root Cause Analysis:*

The Learning and Development Manager will complete a root cause analysis with the person investigating the complaint, and any other relevant staff members, to identify the root cause of the problem.

*Preventative Action:*

Preventative action is the change implemented to address the weakness in the system identified following the root cause analysis, to help prevent a reoccurrence of a similar issue. The Learning and Development Manager will record the details of the action taken.

*Closing a Complaint:*

The Learning and Development Manager will review the complaint preventative action taken to ensure that the complaint has been resolved. The Complaints Form will be stored via SharePoint within the Complaints Folder and the Complaints Log updated.

*Complaint Monitoring and Review:*

The Learning and Development Manager will review complaints on a monthly basis and any trends will be identified.

*Complaint Reporting:*

The Learning and Development Manager will report complaints to any relevant meetings where required.

7. **Confidentially**

All complaints will be treated seriously, handled sensitively and with due consideration to all parties involved. All complainants will be treated fairly and not suffer any recrimination or disadvantage as a result of making a complaint.

Any person named in a complaint, however, will be informed and have a right of reply as part of the investigative process.

Complaints must be made by complainants themselves, however, we recognise that some apprentices and vulnerable adults may have difficulties with this and so encourage them to use assistance where required from a third party to make their complaint effectively.
8. Appeals Procedure
A copy of the complaint (with any supporting evidence) should be sent to the Learning and Development Manager within 21 days of receiving the response to the complaint, detailing the grounds for seeking an appeal:

- The complainant believes there has been an error in the process of the complaint investigation
- The complainant believes there is additional evidence that was not considered in the complaint investigation.

The Learning and Development Manager will collate all the relevant details and submit this to the CEO for review.

The CEO will investigate the complaint, including all documentary evidence. Following investigation, a written response will be produced details whether the complaint is upheld or not and detailing action(s) necessary to resolve the issue.

9. Complaint Escalation
A complaint may only be escalated once it has been taken through CIRO complaints and appeals procedure. If the complainant is not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the CEO, then the complaint may be escalated.

The escalation route required to taken will be dependent on the nature of the complaint.

CIRO students have the option to contact Glasgow Caledonian University Department of Governance and Quality. Staff in the Department can be contacted at complaints@gcu.ac.uk or via telephone on 0141 331 8226. Details of the complaints handling procedure can be found on the Glasgow Caledonian University website: https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/governance/complaintsstudentconduct/complaints